



U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
Northern District of Illinois*

Gary S. Shapiro
Acting United States Attorney

*Dirksen Federal Courthouse
219 South Dearborn Street, 5th Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60604
(312) 353-5300*

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www.justice.gov/usao/iln

PRESS CONTACT:
AUSA / PIO Randall Samborn
312-353-5318

U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE TO CONDUCT ELECTION DAY MONITORING

ELECTION DAY HOTLINE: (312) 469-6157

CHICAGO — The U.S. Attorney’s Office will monitor the general election in Chicago and surrounding suburbs on Tuesday, Nov. 6, 2012, Gary S. Shapiro, Acting United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois, announced today. As part of the monitoring effort, the office will operate a hotline for candidates or the public to call to report any complaints relating to voting. In addition, Assistant U.S. Attorneys and other personnel will be monitoring certain polling places, while other attorneys will be available to respond to complaints as needed.

The hotline number, staffed on Election Day only, is **(312) 469-6157**.

“This office has a long tradition of monitoring the polls on Election Day to help protect the integrity of the voting process,” Mr. Shapiro said. “No one who is entitled to vote should in any way be inhibited from doing so, and we stand ready to ensure a fair process for all.”

Assistant U.S. Attorney Stephen Heinze coordinates the office’s election monitoring efforts and subsequent investigations, if any, in consultation with the Justice Department. The Chicago Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the U.S. Marshals Service will assist in this effort by following-up, if necessary, on any election fraud and voting rights complaints.

Complaints about ballot access problems or discrimination can also be made directly to the Civil Rights Division's Voting Section in Washington at 1-800-253-3931 or 202-307-2767.

Federal law protects against such crimes as intimidating or bribing voters, buying and selling votes, altering vote tallies, stuffing ballot boxes, and marking ballots for voters against their wishes or without their input. It also contains special protections for the rights of voters and provides that they can vote free from acts that intimidate or harass them. For example, actions of persons designed to interrupt or intimidate voters at polling places by questioning or challenging them, or by photographing or videotaping them, under the pretext that these are actions to uncover illegal voting may violate federal voting rights law. Further, federal law protects the right of voters to mark their own ballot or to be assisted by a person of their choice.

Violations of federal voting rights statutes carry penalties ranging from 1 to 10 years imprisonment and fines up to \$250,000.

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